

Direzioni Coraggiose - Brave Paths

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The graphic work at the railway station of Villa Claudia (Fig.1a, 1b, before the work and 1c, 1d after been repainted) in the municipality of Anzio (Rome), was made in February 2007, with the approval of RFI (Rete Ferroviaria Italiana). With a great sense of responsibility the writer undertook this project in a place that is part of the hinterland of Rome, where he lived for many years and where he saw its continuous human and environmental degradation. Local institutions, rather than enhancing the territory by exploiting the enormous potential of its heritage (historical & environmental), have focused on an economy based on the speculative overbuilding, facilitated by the indifference and acceptance of the citizens. A parallel social context has been created, in which the illegality is justified and the concept of “public goods” ignored, with the consequent increase of baby-gangs, gambling addiction, drug dealing and of garbage that “embellish” roads and beaches (Fig. 2).

Street art can have a great global impact in close relationship with the place itself and the population that lives it (Borriello et. al 2010); “Orma/Zampetta” (see appendix for a brief biography) believes in fact that is essential to put up ideas on public buildings that are lived by people. He often associates the drawing with a sentence in order to strengthen the critical function and, at the same time, calling into question the involuntary spectator. The phrase from which he started “SAREBBE L’ORA DI PRENDERE DIREZIONI CORAGGIOSE” (IT IS ABOUT TIME TO TAKE BRAVE PATHS) (Fig. 3) correlate a series of characters struggling with a daily

life that imposes rhythms marked by a consumerist vision and intends to invite the public to change their attitude (Fig. 4a, 4b). The station itself is synonymous of change, by getting on the train we also undertake a change, a journey to the new and the removal from the safety of the family environment. The tracks indicate a precise and predefined direction from which it is dangerous to derail. To “take brave directions” means making a different choice from the one imposed by the rails, always parallel, always equidistant. To break the monotony of the tracks would mean to defeating the prejudices (preconceptions), to break down the distances towards the neighborhoods, to break the alienating rhythm to which we are subordinated every day.

Two main objectives were considered to communicate a personal vision on the walls of the station, which is a secondary stop of a trainline that every day sees thousands of people struggling with their work-study schedules:

Firstly, the possibility of re-appropriation of a public space presenting it as a comic work (Fig. 5a, 5b) and thus subtracting it from advertising signs and the visual bombardment of various brands present on the territory (Fig. 6).

Secondly, since the station is a public asset it was necessary to focus the attention of passers-passengers on a theme of common interest. A message of change needed to be spoken aloud, in a territory where a very conservative mentality dominates and also to make the spectators to reflect, hoping to awaken a critical conscience.

In order to renew the subversive gesture of the first writers (such as Zephyr, Lee, Taki 109, Dondi) it is crucial to develop the one's practice within a constructive discourse of the common (Pani et al., 2008). Sometimes it becomes essential to intervene, to redevelop and to implement decorating paths in places where the old modules have evidently failed. Since street art has been legally recognized, the artist-spectator relationship has become more intimate; direct, free from filters and rules imposed by society and the dominant cultures (Galal, 2009), also this can be represented a great change.

Appendix

Costantino Casella in art Orma/Zampetta, was born in Rome in 1969 and from the age of 13 he began to use sprays to write slogans praising his football faith and later on political phrases. In the mid-90s he approached the world of graffiti by refining the technique and beginning to enrich the messages with comics-caricatural style drawings and to sign his "pieces" with a paw (Fig. 7a, 7b), which then became the tag that identifies him. Assuming the pseudonym given to him of "zampetta" he participates in jam and writing convention throughout Italy, leaving its mark also in Barcelona, Madrid, Lyon, Crete and Istanbul. In 2007, together with other artists, he founded the cultural association Partecipastazione becoming a creator of urban works, collaborating with local national Italian institutions and creating writing workshops for young people (Fig. 8a, 8b, 8c).

Here one can find some of his work: <http://www.lasciailsegno.it/index.php?it/225/orma-zampetta>

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List of Figures

Fig. 1a – Villa Claudia train station before artwork

Fig. 1b – Villa Claudia train station before artwork

Fig. 1c – Villa Claudia train station after artwork was taken down

Fig. 1d – Villa Claudia train station after artwork was taken down

Fig. 2 – Residential neighborhood in Anzio

Fig. 3 – Main graffiti's character

Fig. 4a – Others graffiti's characters

Fig. 4b – Others graffiti's characters

Fig. 4c – Others graffiti's characters

Fig. 5a – Graffiti's paper tests

Fig. 5b – Graffiti's paper tests

Fig. 6 – Advertisements panels. From: <http://www.ilcaffè.tv/articolo/12781/continua-il-braccio-di-ferro-sul-business-dei-cartelloni-pubblicitari-in-citta>

Fig. 7a – Graffiti author

Fig. 7b – Graffiti author at work

Fig. 8a – Young people workshops

Fig. 8b – Young people workshops

Fig. 8c – Young people workshops



Fig. 1 - a, b, c, d



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4 - a, b, c



Fig. 5 - a, b



Fig. 6



Fig. 7, - a, b



Fig. 8, - a, b, c